

Makoshika State Park is Montana's largest state park, encompassing over 11,500 acres of pure wonderment for visitors to enjoy year-round. Makoshika (Ma-KO'-shi-ka) is a variant spelling of a Lakota phrase *maco sica* meaning land of bad spirits, "badlands." Located in eastern Montana in Glendive, Makoshika offers a variety of cultural and historical activities.

The landscape offers an array of different features of hogback ridges, fluted hillsides, pinnacles, gullied slopes and caprocks which decorate the landscape with brilliant geologic colors that change with varying patterns of light. This area has been a hotbed for the sciences of Paleontology, Anthropology, and Geology.

Activities in Makoshika State Park

- ◆ Camping
- ◆ Hiking
- ◆ Biking
- ◆ Picniking
- ◆ Archery range
- ◆ Photography
- ◆ Disc Golf course
- ◆ Wildlife watching

Annual Events at Makoshika State Park

(ask about dates!)

- ◆ Buzzard Day - second weekend in June
- ◆ Summer Youth Program, Thursday mornings
- ◆ Summer Campfire Program, Thursday evenings
- ◆ Shakespeare in the Park
- ◆ Musical concert series

For more information

Makoshika State Park
Box 1242
Glendive, MT 59330
(406) 377-6256
Website: <http://fwp.mt.gov>
E-mail: makoshika@mt.gov



**Montana Fish,
Wildlife & Parks**



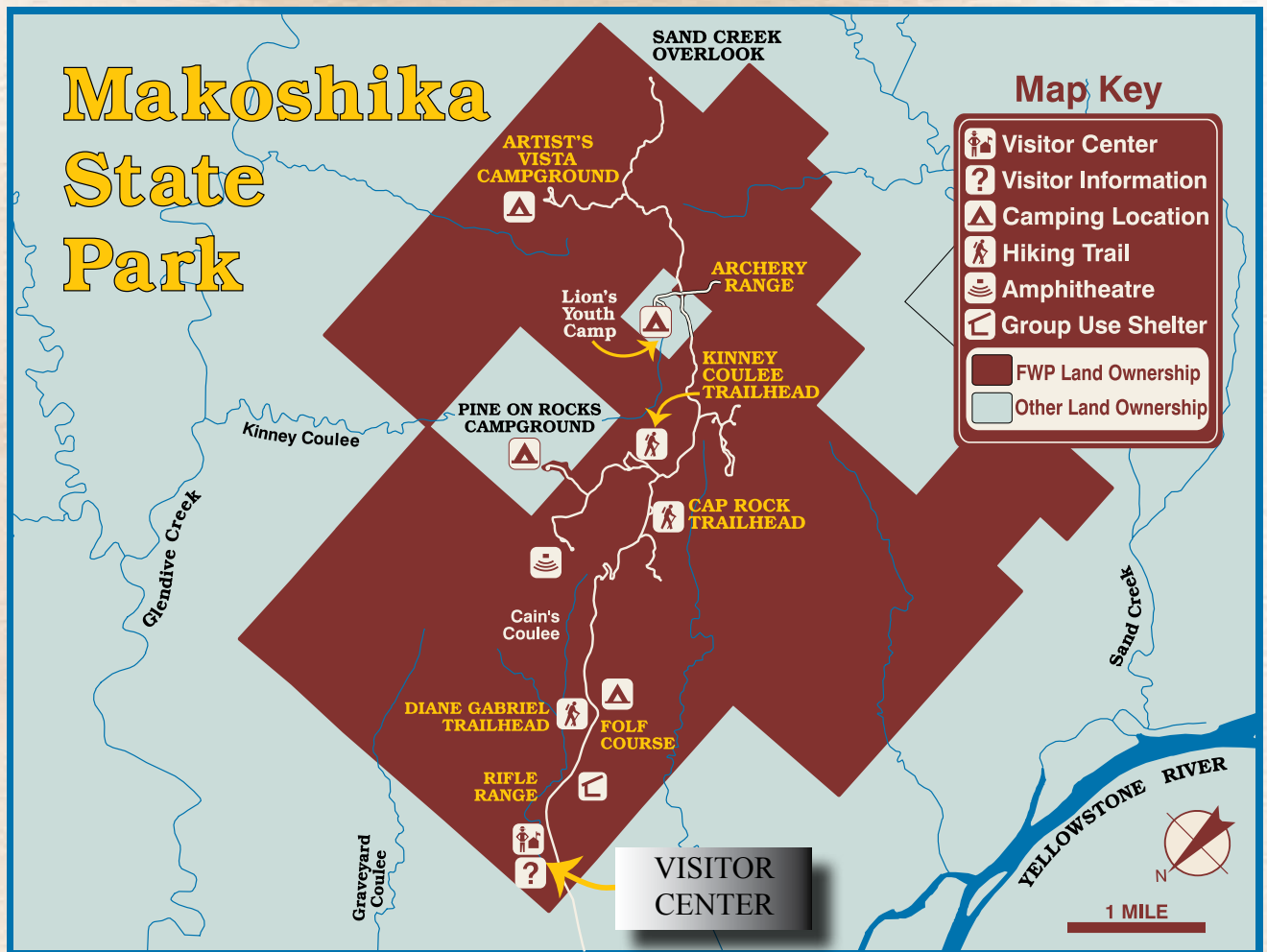
MAKOSHIKA STATE PARK

THE BADLANDS OF EASTERN MONTANA



REAL MONTANA. REAL CLOSE.

Makoshika State Park



REGULATIONS

Here are a few guidelines for park protection and visitor enjoyment. A complete listing of regulations is posted at the park entrance.

- All **vehicles** are to observe posted speed limits and remain on authorized roads and parking areas.
- **Campfires** are restricted to established firerings. Please observe any fire restrictions.
- **Pets** must be kept on a leash.
- The Makoshika State Park Visitor Center is open all year; however, inclement weather may cause portions of the park roads to be closed.
- Please preserve **natural features** and man-made facilities by leaving them intact and in place.
- Respect **private property**: Private lands surround the park.
- Collecting, digging, or removal of fossils or artifacts is prohibited.

The mineral-laden soft sedimentary rocks with contrasting décor of pines and junipers create a backdrop of unique shapes and colors that are filled with history. Makoshika (Ma-KO'-shi-ka) is an alternate spelling of a Lakota phrase *maco sica* meaning land of bad spirits, "badlands." This formidable landscape was set aside as a state park in 1953.

A look at the Past...

Here at Makoshika, the badlands expose older rock layers than those in the badlands of the Dakotas. The Yellowstone River and its tributaries cut into this rock, which illustrate a fascinating time in history: the transition from the time of dinosaurs to the Age of Mammals. Brownish gray sediments of the lower Hell Creek Formation date back 65 million years when the Rocky Mountains were forming in the west. The Cretaceous Period, "The Age of Reptiles," was a time when this area had a sub-tropical climate and vegetation. Rivers draining from the western mountains deposited layers upon layers of sediments, which over millions of years compacted to form the sandstones, mudstones, clays, and shales that form the badlands landscape. Over 10 species of dinosaurs have been found in Makoshika within the Hell Creek Formation. The most well known are the *Triceratops*, *Edmontosaurus* and *Tyrannosaurus rex*.



The *Triceratops* is a dinosaur whose fossilized bones are commonly found in Makoshika

Above the Hell Creek Formation are the sediments of the Fort Union Formation. The upper 100 feet or so of the highest formations in the park are from this era. These Paleocene-age strata mark the beginning of the "Age of Mammals" that began about 64 million years ago. In this Paleocene Fort Union Formation no dinosaur remains are found. The Paleocene sediments were deposited after the dinosaurs and many other species became extinct. Mammal remains are present, but are very sparse in this layer of sedimentary rock. It has only been the last several million years that natural erosion has dissected these ancient sediments and exposed fossils that give us a chance to look into the past at a time of evolutionary transition. Use some imagination to visualize those primeval, tropical environments and creatures, for as you can see the setting is quite different now.

The Present...

Now you can wander through Makoshika and see the effects of erosion on the landscape. Erosion has carved an island of contemporary upland prairie, lined with pines and divided into finger-like mesas by the steep walled, gullied slopes. The clays and shales of the lower sedimentary layers erode much easier than the sandstone layers above; when the softer material erodes away, "caprocks" of sandstone are left delicately balanced over spires of eroded material. The erosion also exposes dinosaur fossils to await discovery. In conjunction with paleontologists at the Museum of the Rockies in Bozeman, dinosaur discoveries are excavated and prepared for exhibit. Now instead of ancient dinosaurs roaming the land you might see mule deer, cottontails and turkey vultures. There is vast diversity in the landscape here. The sun scorched south facing slopes have little vegetation, but finds life with some birds that thrive in this sparse setting, such as prairie falcons, golden eagles, and turkey vultures, all of whom reside on sandstone ledges or in cavities.

North facing slopes, which retain more moisture, maintain dense groves of Rocky Mountain juniper and Ponderosa Pine. Early morning and evening hours typically provide the best light to photograph images of badlands scenes and its inhabitants.

Visitor Center

Take yourself on a self-guided tour in Makoshika's visitor center that chronicles 74 million years of Eastern Montana history through the educational, interpretative, and interactive displays. The visitor center highlights include displays of fossils, invertebrates of early sea life, a Triceratops skull, and other artifacts including stone tools used by man. Makoshika is open for day use, recreation and camping year round. The visitor center is open from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. every day from Memorial Day through Labor Day and 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. every day from Labor Day to Memorial Day.



**The Yucca plant thrives in
Makoshika State Park**



**Makoshika State Park offers numerous
adult and youth interpretive programs.**

Makoshika is a vantage point from which to look back millions of year to imagine a vastly different environment. Ponder the extinction of the mighty dinosaurs as you visit Makoshika. Contemplate the evolution of mammals into our modern world, the drastic change of climates and the creation of the badlands.

Your participation in preserving this place is needed. Please leave fossil remains in place and report significant discoveries to a Department employee so that a professional team can be sent to study and preserve it. Please visit and stay with care so future visitors of all kinds can enjoy their experience at Makoshika State Park.

For more information on Makoshika State Park or any of the other 50 Montana State Parks, log onto fwp.mt.gov

You may also enjoy visiting Makoshika's website at www.makoshika.org

